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ABSTRACT

Reported are "An Investigation of the Factors Related to Anxiety in Children" in Bangladesh, by Dilruba Afrose, and briefly, a study of "Intergenerational Conflicts Regarding Child-Rearing Practices and Their Effects on Certain Behaviours of Children," by Chucha Suwanathat. The former investigation attempted to determine whether maternal attitudes toward child-rearing are related to anxiety reactions in children and to compare anxiety responses of 250 male and 250 female subjects, who were randomly selected from 12 schools in Dhaka. Mothers of high, moderate, and low anxiety children differed significantly on marital conflict, overprotection, and strictness at the .001 level and on punishment at the .05 level. In all cases, except strictness, the mean scores of mothers of high anxiety children were higher than the mean scores of the other mothers. Mothers of low anxiety children scored highest on the strictness scale. Girls were found to be more anxious than boys. Results further indicated that girls' low anxiety scores were associated with mothers' high scores on fostering dependency and positive attitudes toward early training. Opposite trends were found in the case of boys. Among other findings, the latter study indicated that, in contrast to children from families with greater intergenerational conflict, children in families with less conflict express more social ability in playground activities and have greater learning readiness. (Also included are very brief remarks introducing a paper (not provided here) on "Identifying Mental Health Problems in Children," by Jayne G. Garside. This paper emphasized management techniques for attention deficit disorders.) (RH)

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SYMPOSIUM II A : Mental Health of Children

PS 015986

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Intergenerational Conflicts Regarding Child-Rearing Practices and Their Effects on Certain Behaviours of Children**

Chucha Suvanathat

It is well accepted the family has great influence on child-rearing practices. In the traditional Thai family, grandmothers play a major role in child care, particularly in two areas: (1) in rendering assistance to child delivery for a period of 5, 7 or 9 days immediately after child birth; and (2) caring and socialising the child while the parents are at work. Grandfathers also participate in child rearing but to a much smaller extent. In contrast, parents play the major role in child rearing in the nuclear family. Today, the number of nuclear families is increasing in Thailand.

Although young couples are receptive to their parents' advice on matter of child rearing, there may be conflicts in opinions owing to rapid socio-cultural changes and the increasing independence of women. This study attempts to investigate the status of inter-generational conflicts in matters of child rearing. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- (1) investigate the attitudes of parents and grandparents toward child-rearing practice;
- (2) compare social behaviour and learning readiness of children in families differing in amounts of conflicts in child rearing; and
- (3) compare the amount of inter-generational conflicts in child rearing among families whose grandparents' control of power differs.

The sample consists of 100 mother-grandmother pairs whose children are below 5 years of age and 100 preschoolers, aged 3-5 years, and their teachers. Only 33 pairs are available for this preliminary report. The families vary in socio-economic status and are living in urban and rural areas.

A questionnaire of 50 items was administered. The items relate to:

- (1) philosophy, beliefs and principles of child care;
- (2) children's basic need-satisfaction;
- (3) child's socialisation, discipline and morality; and
- (4) promotion of child's growth and development.

Parents and grandparents are interviewed individually.

The main findings are:

- (1) Attitudes of parents and grandparents toward child-rearing practices are positively correlated, although there are suggestions of some disagreement between educated and professional parents and their own parents.
- (2) Children from families with less inter-generational conflict express more social ability in playground activities than those from families with greater inter-generational conflict.
- (3) Children in families with less generational conflicts have greater learning readiness than those from families with greater inter-generational conflicts.
- (4) In families where grandparents' control of power varies, there is no difference in the amount of inter-generational conflicts in child-rearing.

An Investigation of the Factors Related to Anxiety in Children

Dilruba Afrose

INTRODUCTION

On the basis of clinical experiences in dealing with thousands of adults with physical as well as psychological problems, the clinicians have emphasised the importance of anxiety as one of the causative factors. It is also an empirically proven fact that competition and complexities of the modern world create constant anxiety in the adults. But even in developing countries like Bangladesh, where life is not as complex as that of the developed affluent countries and children live comparatively more sheltered life than adults, clinical evidence of children suffering from anxiety is a cause for concern among the clinicians and the professional workers in the field of child and adolescent development. In children, anxiety is manifested by hyperactivity, tension and clumsiness, nightmares, sleepwalking etc. and when it becomes severe, the child shows poor performance in school and therefore, every effort should be made to minimise this unconstructive emotion in children. In order to take any remedial measure, identification of the antecedent conditions for anxiety is essential.

Antecedents of Anxiety

To understand the problem of 'anxiety' is a very difficult task as there may be hidden causes and far reaching consequences. However, researchers in this field tried to attack the problem from various points of view. Sullivan (1953) maintains that anxiety is initially induced in the infant by anxiety in the mother through empathy. According to him, anxiety arises almost inevitably out of initial dependence and helplessness of the human infant. Because he must rely so much on other people for his

survival and well-being, the infant is peculiarly sensitive to their moods and general attitudes toward him. Sooner or later, Sullivan suggests, the person caring for him, most likely his mother, becomes upset about something and in a mysterious non-verbal way, she communicates her feelings to him. Perhaps it has to do with the way she holds him or a change in her expression. The infant senses that something is drastically wrong and experiences the profoundly unpleasant emotion called anxiety. Hill and Sarason (1966), on the other hand, believe that chronic anxiety results from harsh evaluations by parents of children's behaviours and performances in their pre-school years.

Researches into parent-child relationships have shown that the child's behaviour, his personality and his adjustments are the products of interaction between various parental characteristics on the one hand and the child's individual characteristics on the other. Moreover, as the mother plays the dominant role in providing affection, discipline and other socialised behaviours, more emphasis was put on interaction between the mother and the child. But, according to Symonds (1949), the essence of parent-child relations lies more in how a parent feels than in what a parent does, that is, his concern lays with parental attitude.

Clinical studies of mothers of maladjusted children which have been reviewed by Radke (1946) and Symonds (1949) have revealed syndromes of maternal behaviours and attitudes which are related to differential personality structure of children. Research interest in the influence of the parent-child relationships upon personality development of the child has also been stimulated. Studies which have reported that objectively measured attitudes of parents toward child-rearing are related to emotional and social adjustments of children.

From these studies, it may be assumed that parental attitudes toward child-rearing is related to anxiety reactions in children. In this context, we may predict that anxiety will be higher for those children whose parents show maladaptive attitudes toward child-rearing. However, without going into the difficult task of describing what maladaptive attitudes are, let us examine some ways parents show differential attitudes to their children.

In our culture, boys and girls are brought up in such a way that they can fit into their individual stereotype sex roles. Social learning theorists believe that the boys' and the girls' behavioural patterns will be different because from infancy, they are treated differently. In our social system, more demands of a competitive nature are made on boys and they tend to be more anxious about achievement than girls (Hill and Sarason). But Hill and Sarason (1966) maintain that achievement-anxiety is situational anxiety whereas chronic anxiety is found in poorly evaluated children. Traditional beliefs and customs prevalent in our society force the mothers to show a biased attitude and from early infancy, it is apparent to the female child that she is inferior to her brothers as well as to males in general.

PURPOSE

This study was undertaken to investigate whether maternal attitudes toward child-rearing is related to anxiety reactions in children and to make a comparative study of anxiety responses of the boys and the girls.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects consisted of 250 boys and 250 girls who were randomly selected from twelve different schools in Dhaka city. The criteria for selection used for both the boys and the girls were: (1) age of the subjects were to be between 12 to 14 years (2) parents were living together and (3) parents were willing to co-operate. A Children's Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale by Castaneda *et al.*, (1965) was translated into Bengali and administered to the sample. On the basis of the anxiety scores achieved by the respondents, they were divided into three groups namely, high, moderate and low anxiety groups.

Instruments Used

Children's Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS)

The translated Bengali version of the CMAS by Castaneda, McCandless and Palermo (1956) was used to measure the extent of anxiety in children. The original scale was translated into Bengali by the author. The reliability of the instrument was obtained from a group of 100 children in the age range of 12 to 15 years. The test-retest reliabilities over a period of two weeks were 0.84 and 0.71 for anxiety score and lie score respectively. For validity, correlations were calculated between scores obtained by 40 children (20 children scoring very low and 20 children scoring very high) on CMAS and teacher's ratings. The correlation was 0.85 for anxiety and 0.62 for lie score.

The CMAS contained 53 items of which 42 items measured anxiety and 11 items gave the lie score of the children. Space was provided on the sheet for the subjects to answer some questions regarding his age, sex, class, school, home address and parent's profession.

Parents' Attitude Research Instrument (PARI, adjusted)

A structured questionnaire was used to obtain multivariate measurement of attitudes toward child-rearing and the family. The questionnaire was designed to measure seven variables, namely, encouragement of verbalisation, marital conflict, strictness, age of training, fostering dependency, over-protection and punishment. To measure these variables, 28 items were developed based on the items of the PARI. The items were presented to ten judges to identify every item that seemed to represent a given variable. Inter-judge correlation was calculated to find out the highest

agreement among the judges regarding the variables reflected in a given item. The item then was taken as a representative measure of the agreed variable. A brief description of the variables is given below:-

- (1) High scores in the scale measuring encouragement of verbalisation seemed to reflect approval of a close relationship with a child who was permitted freedom to develop as an individual and also could express his views about family affairs and parent's behaviour towards him.
- (2) High scores in the scale measuring attitude towards marital conflict reflected an expectation of a great deal of quarrelling and fighting between husband and wife and reflected hostility which was openly expressed.
- (3) High scores in the scale measuring strictness revealed a demand for conformity to rigid rules.
- (4) High scores in the scale measuring attitude towards age of training revealed a demand for achievement.
- (5) High scores in the scale measuring attitude towards over-protection had a central theme of control of the child through keeping the child indebted to the mother, dependent and immature.
- (6) High scores in the scale measuring attitude towards fostering dependency reflected a perception of the child as a weak person who must be protected by the mother.
- (7) High scores in the scale punishment revealed an attitude that approved of the use of harsh punishment as a method of child training and thus reflected parental dominance.

The response for each item was expressed in a five-point scale—'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' and the subject was to choose one of these responses. The total score of each individual for every variable was determined by summing his/her response scores to all items representing a given variable.

Procedure

The CMAS was administered to the subjects in the classroom following a standard procedure. Then, two research assistants visited and administered to the mothers of the 500 subjects individually the adjusted parents' attitude research questionnaire.

RESULT

Difference between the Anxiety Responses of the Boys and Girls

In order to answer the question on whether there is any difference between the anxiety responses of boys and girls, the percentages of boys

and girls falling in the three levels of anxiety were computed and the mean anxiety scores of the two groups were compared.

Table 1
Classification of Boys and Girls According
to Their Levels of Anxiety (in Percentage)
and Their Mean Anxiety Scores

Sex	N	Low Anxiety	Moderate Anxiety	High Anxiety	Mean Anxiety Score
Girls	250	16.40	58.80	24.80	20.79
Boys	250	26.80	60.40	12.80	18.02

Table 1 shows the percentages of boys and girls at the three levels of anxiety and their mean anxiety score. The results indicate that in comparison to boys, a higher percentage of girls do suffer from high anxiety and their mean anxiety score (20.79) is also higher than that of the boys (18.02). In short, the girls were found to be more anxious than the boys.

Table 2
Scales on Which Differences between Mothers of Low, Moderate
and High Anxiety Children Were Significant

Scale	Mean			F	P
	Low Anxiety	Moderate Anxiety	High Anxiety		
Punishment	27.61	28.00	28.58	3.13	.05
Marital Conflict	22.83	24.37	26.17	27.07	.001
Over Protection	22.93	22.90	24.95	19.82	.001
Strictness	20.82	19.76	18.25	8.75	.001

Relationship between the Attitudes of Mothers Toward Child Rearing and Anxiety Reaction

For this purpose, the obtained scores were analysed, using the analysis of variance. Table 2 reports the scales in which significant differences were found between the mothers of high, moderate and low anxiety children. The mothers of three groups differed significantly on marital conflict, overprotection and strictness at the .001 level and on punishment at the .05 level. In all cases, except strictness, the mean scores of the mothers of high anxiety children were higher than the mean scores of the mothers of moderate and low anxiety children. However, on the scale for strictness,

the mean scores of the mothers of low anxiety children exceeded the mean scores of the mothers of the other two groups.

Table 3 shows the scales on which mothers of low, moderate and high anxiety boys differed significantly from others of low, moderate and high anxiety girls. On the scale for fostering dependency, differences were significant at .05 level and on the scale for age of training, significant difference was found at .001 level. Results provided in Table 3 indicate that the higher the mothers' score on the scale for fostering dependency, the lower was the anxiety in girls. The opposite trend was found in the case of the boys. Results also indicated that the more positive the mothers' attitude towards early training, the lower was the anxiety in girls. Also, mothers of high anxiety boys scored higher than the mothers of low and moderate anxiety boys on this scale.

The scale encouragement of verbalisation failed to differentiate significantly between the mothers of low, moderate and high anxiety children.

Table 3
Scales on Which Mothers of Low, Moderate and
High Anxiety Boys Differed Significantly
from Mothers of Low, Moderate and High Anxiety Girls

Scale	Sex	Mean			F	P
		Low Anxiety	Moderate Anxiety	High Anxiety		
Fostering Dependency	Girls	13.88	13.47	13.29	3.25	.05
	Boys	13.25	13.08	13.74		
Age of Training	Girls	12.04	11.85	11.51	8.82	.001
	Boys	11.03	11.56	12.37		

DISCUSSION

Examination of the results of the present study indicates that girls in the urban areas of Bangladesh are more anxious than their male counterparts. Our culture and social system are mainly responsible for these differences between the sexes. At birth, the female children are subjected to differential treatment. Girls are taught to conform, to be docile and to be dependent, whereas the boys are taught to succeed, to achieve and to be independent. The girls in our society have restricted freedom and are subjected to prejudices and religious biases. The girl's stereotype role is thus inferior to the boys and therefore undesirable. Lipsitt (1958) found that children with poor self-concepts were more anxious than children with good self-concepts. It is highly possible that girls having inferior sex-role may have poor self-concept and as a result, they are more anxious than the boys.

When the attitude of mothers of low, moderate and high anxiety children towards child-rearing were analysed, significant differences were found between them on the following scales — punishment, marital conflict, overprotection and strictness. It is found that the more punitive the mother, the higher is the anxiety in children. When the mothers use punishment as a technique of discipline, they show little sympathy or attempt to understand the child's behaviour and very often, anger accompanies punishment. As a result, the child feels the absence of a supportive and loving mother to whom he may turn for protection and succour, and thus suffers from insecurity and anxiety.

Mother of higher anxiety children were found to obtain the highest score on the scale 'marital conflict'. Unhappy and dissatisfied parents have difficulty in teaching their children good adjustment. Their tension hinders them from providing a relaxed easy going social situation in which the child can learn that interpersonal relationships are rewarding. Therefore, these children are likely to have tense unpleasant relation with other children which might result in creating further anxiety in them.

The results reveal that the higher the scores of the mothers on the scale for overprotection, the higher is the anxiety in the children. The over-protected children have great difficulty in maintaining friendship since other children are not so tolerant of their behaviour as their mothers are. Sometimes, they unsuccessfully use immature techniques to attract attention and are rejected by other children. Thus over-protection might cause anxiety in children.

The most interesting finding is that the more positive the mothers' attitude towards strictness, the lower is the anxiety in children. It may be argued that some degree of strictness is necessary for the proper development of a child. Baumrind (1967) suggests that authoritative parental control is desirable. If the parents are willing to impose restriction in areas in which they have greater knowledge or insight, such discipline gives the child the opportunity to explore his environment and interpersonal competence without the anxiety associated with the inexperience in conforming to the demands and needs of others associated with extreme permissiveness.

Further analysis of the results shows that when the mothers obtained high scores on the scale for fostering dependency, anxiety was the lowest amongst the girls but was highest amongst the boys. Our culture emphasises independence, initiative and success more for boys than girls. Girls are expected to conform whereas boys are expected to excel. So, when the mothers foster dependency in girls, it is consistent with social expectation and does not create anxiety amongst them. Higher scores on the scale for age of training indicate mothers' expectation that the child should reach developmental goals at an accelerated pace.

The present investigation shows that mothers emphasising early training have girls with low anxiety but boys with high anxiety. It may be argued that as the physical development of girls takes place at a quicker pace than boys, they can satisfy their mothers by being trained at an accelerated rate, thus avoiding conflict and reducing anxiety. Boys, on the other hand, face difficulty in meeting their mothers' demand for early training and, therefore, show higher anxiety reactions.

Finally, it may be said that relationships between different factors need not necessarily be cause and effect relationships. One is tempted to conclude from the findings of this study that the mothers' attitudes toward child-rearing is one of the most important antecedent conditions for anxiety reactions in children. Therefore, modification of unfavourable attitudes of the parents toward child-rearing is recommended for minimising this unconstructive and undesirable emotional reaction.

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Identifying Mental Health Problems in Children**

Jayne G. Garside

There is an alarming increase in the incidence of children's suicides—ages 6 through 14 (puberty). Currently, the major ages of suicide in children are 14 to 21.

The majority of these suicides spring from mental health problems, most of which were never perceived of by the adult community. Usually, this non-perception is a result of the 'masking problems' children present such as the inability to do homework, false sensory images, illusions (usually based on some facts) and even delusions.

Mood and cognition are two adult variables but in children, behaviour or acting out give immediate cues as to potential mental health problems. It is said that suicidal thoughts in children are worse than in adults as children translate problem into immediate acting out. There is no time for alternative solutions. This paper deals with the most common mental health problems in children.

- (1) Attention deficit disorders
- (2) Pervasive developmental disorders
- (3) Schizophrenic disorders
- (4) Affective (emotional) disorders
- (5) Adjustment disorders.

An added component presents techniques in the management of the most common type of mental health problems—attention deficit disorders. In this paper, theory and practical applications are mingled.